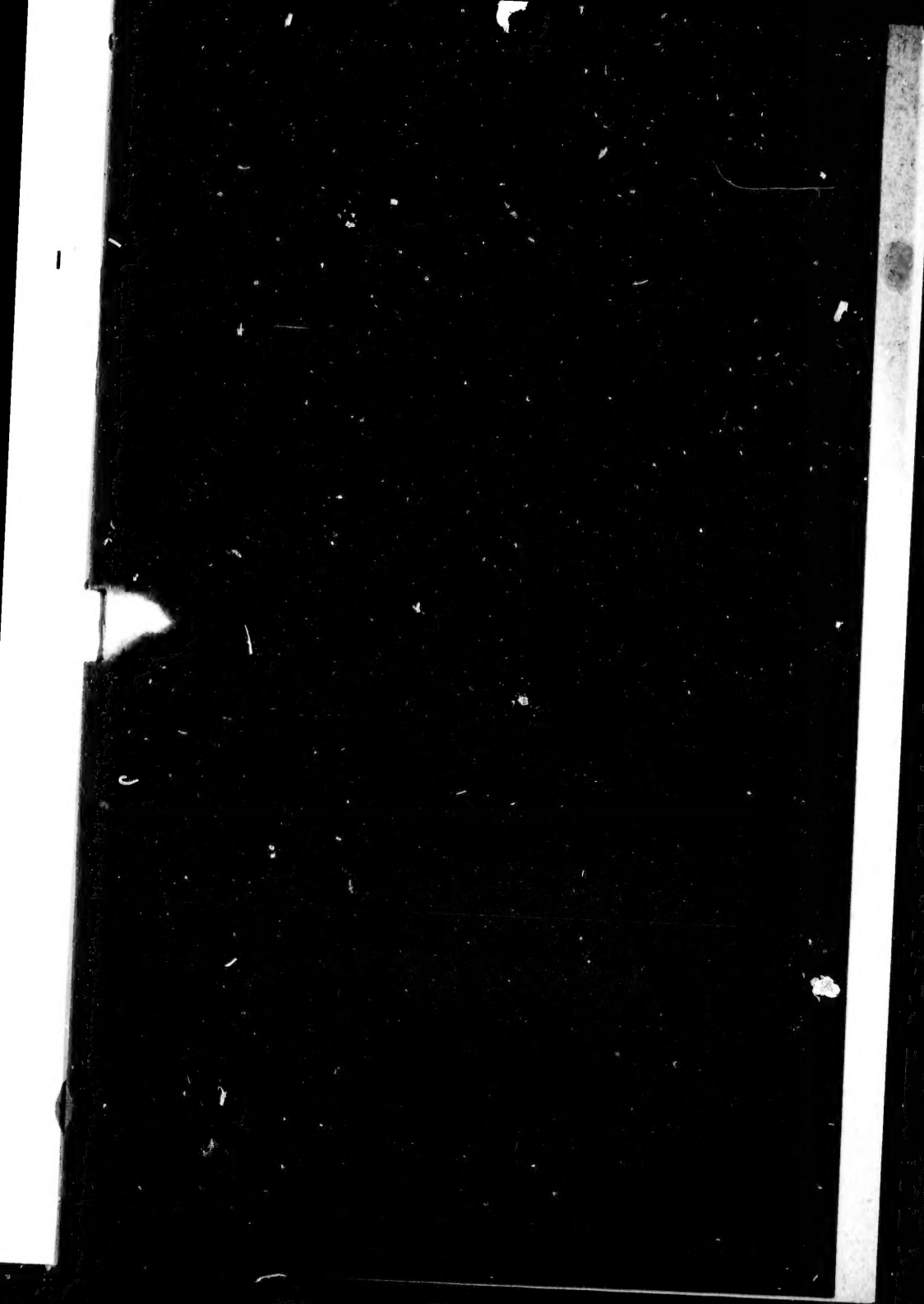

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THE ORATION ON "THE GODS."

To Col. R. G. Ingersoll:—

SIR,—I have carefully read your oration on "The Gods." There is a great deal of truth in it, but there is also a great deal of spurious truth. If the idea of spurious truth is new to you, let me define it. It is truth as to the mere outward appearance of a thing, and that is sometimes quite contrary to the reality. You might describe a ship at a great distance as a "brig," and do so truthfully; yet the reality might be a brig-rigged steamship run out of coal. You had said the truth honestly enough, only it was "spurious truth"—truth as to appearance only.

I have heard you lecture—have read those of your lectures which I have not heard, and hold the highest opinion of the sincerity of your aims: therefore, there is, I beg you to understand, nothing of personal enmity in any expression, however strong, I may here use in opposing your views. I trust that fact will be sufficiently apparent in what follows.

No possible objection ought to be taken by any honest, truth-loving man to your attack, on the ground of falsity, of any or every established religion under the sun. You are right to urge man's claim to freedom of thought. But then remember that to make a hindrance of yourself in doing so is to weaken your cause, and the cause of all of us who lay claim to absolute freedom to use our rational faculties. Yet, here is what you go and do. You say "it is the crowning glory of our century to have demonstrated the indestructibility and the eternal persistence of force." Who is there "eternal" enough among us to *establish* the eternal persistence of force? What is force, anyhow? Is it will? is it life? It cannot be a property of matter; for you say "force cannot exist apart from matter. Matter exists only in connection with force." Matter and force seem, according to this, to be two distinct things, neither a property or quality of the other, yet inextricably joined. You say "matter was not created, and that force must also have existed from eternity." Again, you assert that "a first cause is just as impossible as a last effect." Yet you add that there can be no cause without an effect, and no effect without a cause. So, if there be no first cause there can be no first effect, and if there be no last cause, of course there can be no last effect. The logical result of such reasoning is, not even chaos, but nothing—literally nothing; no nature, no God, no man, no matter, no force—nothing. For, if matter and force be causes they must be either first causes or else effects. So, if there be no

first cause and no last effect, both of which you say are alike impossible, you have reasoned both force and matter out of existence by the "force" of logic.

For the sake of your sanity and mine, therefore, that we may continue to be able to believe the evidence of our senses, which tell us that there is at least a material world in which we live, we are forced to conclude that both force and matter are effects, and must have had a cause, or else that the one was the "cause" of the other "effect." If so, then which is the effect? and which the cause? If neither is a "cause," then set to work and find a cause for both "effects." Either one cause for each effect or one cause for both.

You get worse, however, as you go on. You add, "Suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is no being superior to nature, and that matter and force have existed from eternity. Now, suppose that two atoms should come together, would there be an effect? Yes. Suppose they came in exactly opposite directions with equal force, they would be stopped, to say the least. This would be an effect." Then you go on to suppose "motion" to be eternal also. Here is where you get most woefully mixed up, and injure all claim of man to rationality. It is very pretty to suppose two atoms, driven in opposite directions with equal force, coming together; but what earthly or supernatural cause drove them together? It is graven with a pen of iron on every man's inner consciousness and outward experience that "motion" is ever and always an effect of force, and motion can only be eternal if the force of which it is the effect is eternally kept up. Don't ask us to believe that "motion" can exist as a cause without being first an effect. And remember, too, that force is not necessarily always motion. Force may be quite inert. There is no force in a cannon ball till it acquires motion. There is force stored up in gunpowder, but it is heat, which is a form of motion, that brings the latent force into action. So, perceiving this, you construct your eternal self-existing matter and force as quite inert till motion develops their force and causes effects. Motion is the real primary principle in your creation theory—is, in fact, your god. This is the very worst god to swallow of them all, for it is written on nature's every page that motion is only a phenomenon of matter—ever an effect of some cause. Yet the uncaused origin of all the train of effects we see around and in us is, by your logic, motion. That is how you fly off the handle. It is not even a spurious truth—a truth true to appearances—which you choose as your god. It is simply a mental, logical, experimental absurdity.

Now, after the just views you have expressed as regards the gods of other people, this is truly astonishing; for you are truthful and correct as to the manner in which men have set up gods in all ages, to use for their own purposes. That is a fact in history—nay, more, it is going on to-day and now. But why—oh! why—add the god "Motion" as your own special pet god?

But I believe you are really in earnest in your search after truth which can be wrought into goodness of a practical kind. If so the way is open. You have certainly seen through, and cleared away, a lot of the rubbish. You ought to be able by this time to look inside of yourself and see that what you call "force" is "will" or "life," and "matter" is the form in which that will or life clothes itself. You have "will," and you know right well it is that will which moves and controls the chemicals which make up your physical frame, moulds and re-forms the substances it wills or hungers to take into that frame till it changes bread into the comprehension of what you call "the divine tragedy of Hamlet," or the sounds which are known as an "oration on the gods." That "will" is your life. It only clothes, and thus renders itself visible, legible, tangible, by means of the matter it lays hold upon. Such is *your* will or life force. It creates a little world around it from the very moment of its conception, and in that world you live and move and have your being, creating and re-creating it in fuller perfection right on to full manhood's prime. And this your world is not only material, it is also mental; or, if you won't get mad at the term, spiritual. Your will collects mental or spiritual substances also; indeed it must collect these first before it can fully lay hold upon and mould to its will material substances. Even with your advanced ideas I hardly think you will care to assert that man is the primary cause of everything that exists; even although he may be the primary cause of his own mental and material body. Surely it is doubtful a little if he made the world and all the suns and stars, swung them into their places, and set them going. And yet there is nothing in the whole realm of nature that has anything like the same quality of life that man possesses. When I say "man" I do not mean the gentleman in the dug-out, though he too had will and intellect of a certain kind, and evidently, by your own theory, capable of expansion, but "man" as we know him. If "man" was not his own cause what was? A cause must always be greater than its effect. The effect can never exceed the cause. Yet man, as we know him, *has* powers and faculties which are not to be found in any other form of matter. Do stones think? Do plants reason? Do animals write treatises on political economy, or give orations on the gods? Do matter and force love each other? Is "matter" capable of denying itself that it may help "force" to get along? Does "force" ever teach "matter" to read and write? It does of course I know at school. when the irate schoolmaster thrashes the matter-of-fact schoolboy, but then, ought it? You know well enough that neither you nor I approve highly of that method. Can force and matter, even when combined with your god motion, invent a steam engine? Can then these as causes, produce effects greater than themselves? I think not.

In "man" you must seek the analogy which shall guide you to the truth anent the cause or causes of the existence of matter.

Man has will or life, and thought or intellect, and these lay hold of matter. But in so far as these *do* control and mould matter at will, they must surely be some substance superior to matter. They cannot then be caused *by* it, though they may live *in* it and cause in matter what you call your god "motion." Yet, though man has life or will flowing out into thought and action, he is not conscious of any time at which he took that life to himself, originated, or created it. He only knows that he has it—that he *is* it. It is life—it is himself, his real self, yet he can neither imagine nor prove that he himself is the originator of it. Whence could it have come? From Nature? There is nothing like it in Nature, except in other men, and even in each it is different. It is only an effect. It must have a cause. Nature, matter, material force, cannot cause an effect which has power to control or mould itself. The lesser can never give birth to the greater. An effect can never be greater in degree or quality than its cause. A tree blossoms, fructifies, and gives birth to a similar tree. A metal fused and separated into its component parts, or two metals fused together, never give birth to will and intellect. Dogs do not breed horses. Horses do not breed winged birds that cleave the air with a similar swiftness and strength on eagle's pinions. Whatever Darwin may say about it, no rational man believes it; no man ever saw it done. Reason and experience alike teach the re-existence of the cause in the effect. There must then be some force superior to material force to produce mental or spiritual force such as we find existent in man; and there is. The analogy drawn from the living experience of man is the true guide to a clear understanding of what that force is.

To say man wills, is to say man loves or desires. Will and love are identical. Take away the love, the will to do anything, and nothing is done. Will or love is life. A man cannot think unless he wills to think; and he can only think that which he wills —only that and nothing more. He can only do what he wills and thinks. There is no action which is not the effect of will and its thought. A man wills in order to think, and must think in order to do. The "end" is will; the "cause" is thought and action is the "effect." Yet as will is not self-derived, for, as we have seen, no man gives himself will or love, *i. e.* life, it must be an effect from some cause, unless you can prove man's will or life to be self-derived and self-existent, in short the primary cause, of all things outside of himself as well as within himself. Try to do so. In the kindliest spirit I defy you to prove it. The effort to do so will only show your own weakness.

Since it seems that the phenomena of man's life do not, so far as experience goes, result from the involuntary movements of matter, and since it is hard, if not utterly impossible, to prove that man is himself, by his will and thought, the originator of all material things, reason must seek some other cause existent somewhere outside of matter. We must perforce elevate our thoughts

to a plane above material things, not however rejecting these as the basis of our reasoning, but rather looking down into them, as it were, to see how they work under the pressure of this "somewhat" which moves, controls, and animates them. To do this is extremely easy, because the needed faculties are within man. Man is not matter only, as we have seen. He has, or rather is, will and intellect—and these are not phosphates. Here is the ladder by which we ascend. Will or Love is man's very life, manifesting itself, *by* thought, *in* action. The will and its thought are spiritual, or, if you like it better, mental life, and constitute the real substance which interpenetrates and moves the matter which composes the physical man. But these, *i. e.*, will and intellect, in so far as they are neither self-derived nor self-existent are "effects" of a "cause," even although it be true that, as "effects," they, in their turn, become "causes." There can only be *one* source of life. You admit that yourself, and find that cause or source in "motion." "Motion" is your god; but it is not the True One. "God is Love," will, life, dwelling within and producing wisdom and manifesting both as a one in action. The parallel is complete. Man is will, love, life, dwelling within and producing thought (which, however, is not always wisdom), and manifesting both as a one, in physical action. The will, which is the inmost of man, forms thought, and interpenetrates with these, which united make up what we call his mental or spiritual life, the materials surrounding him, moulding and fashioning them according to that will. He wills, thinks and acts. There are in him your three elements, "force," "motion," and their ultimate effect, "matter"—or end, cause, and effect. Yet, as we have seen that man is not self-caused but is only an effect, it is surely rational to suppose that there is a complete analogy of kind between the cause and the effect, whether there be an analogy in degree or not. The greater may cause the less—never the less the greater. Therefore we are justified in concluding that God is Love or will infinitely—the Infinite Source of all will or life—because though the effect or life of one man is little, infinitesimal indeed—compared to the cause, yet the myriads of lives of which He (God) is the source are in the aggregate as nearly infinite as we can imagine, by the full stretch of our mortal powers, infinity to be.

It is here necessary to revert to one point in which you depart from your usual strict adherance to justice to your opponents. You say "that religionists contend that matter cannot produce thought, but that thought can produce matter—that man has intelligence, and therefore there must be an intelligence greater than his." You do not state their argument fairly, or else they state it carelessly. Nobody but a maniac would say that *human* thought or intelligence *produces* matter. It can only mould or reform it. You demolish this theory as stated by you, thus, "why not say God has intelligence, therefore there must be an intelligence greater than His." No man who believes in God as the Source of all life talks thus foolishly. We do not say that God *has* intelligence, but

that God *is* wisdom in form and Love in essence, and therefore the Infinite Source of all intelligence. You ought always to be fair to your opponents. In refutation of the supposed argument you add, "so far as we know there is no intelligence apart from matter. We cannot conceive of thought except as produced within a brain." This is playing with truth. It is spurious truth—according to appearance only. You mean surely that we never see thought except as expressed through or by matter. You unconsciously admit this when you say, "we cannot conceive of thought except as *produced within* a brain." You do not say produced *by* a brain. It is truth in reality, and not spurious truth, to say that thought interpenetrates and uses the brain. And here your own words are applicable, that "the cause can never be greater than the effect." It is not thought which is the effect of the brain, but it is the brain which is used by the thought to ultimate itself in matter as an effect. If it were not so it would be quite possible to make a brain out of the matter of which it is composed, and, if exactly proportioned as regards the component ingredients of matter, you would have the satisfaction, as soon as it was completed, of seeing your handiwork *begin* to think. If you could analyze a living man's brain and then analyze the brain of a man two hours dead, I have no doubt you would find precisely the same matter in each. Why then does not that matter continue to think in the one case as well as in the other?

Having thus raised ourselves above merely dead inert matter, we begin to realize that will and intellect are substances also—must indeed be far more substantial, since they move and control matter, and that not only the matter which composes arms, hands, or feet, but the very material brain itself, from which radiate the nerves, which, by means of the muscles, set the limbs in motion. We can now look down from this height we have attained, you and I together, and observe the process. We can actually will to think, desire to know, and observe how matter, in ourselves and our surroundings, is affected by our life-power of will and thought. We can perceive that the will that *is* us conceives our thought and stamps itself upon our deeds—even upon the things we manufacture. The law of our will and its thought remains inherent in the very constitution and nature of every piece of machinery we make. Just think how you traced it yourself in the dug-out, and the gentleman who invented and laboriously constructed it. These machines are not parts of ourselves, because they are not will and thought—that is, they are not mental or spiritual substances, but material. Yet in their every line and curve, use or beauty, there remains as a soul, distinctly traceable, "the effect of our will and thought as a 'cause.'" Again, the parallel is complete. The created worlds are not God. They are the material effects of His infinite will and thought. They are emanations from Himself—no longer Himself—yet in every use, beauty and joy which smile in Nature and Nature's gifts, in every law by which they act, there does re-

main as a soul, distinctly traceable, the " effect " of His divine will and thought as a " cause."

Into the process, manner, or method of creation, I have not brains enough fully to enter, nor you to follow. Nor, were we both so gifted, has science yet advanced far enough to give us the material of fact required in the effort. But still there are lines along which you may dimly perceive the Truth, if you care to look, and these lines are perhaps most easily perceptible by us in the creation of man. Because man is, after all, what you and I know most about. Infinite Love is either love of self or love of others. Love must have something to love, either self or some one outside of self. Love could hardly be infinite if bounded by self. Infinite Love must have infinite yearnings to expend affection on beings fitted to receive it, and give it out again towards others in that imitation of the Giver, which is such sincere flattery as to become really a wise return of affection towards the Giver. An Infinite Love must naturally, by its very nature, express itself in an Infinite Wisdom, and ultimate both in Infinite Goodness; just as a finite love finds knowledge enough to serve those loved. So Wisdom is the form of Love, and Nature is the effect of Wisdom animated by Love; for " God is Love." Never mind the process just at present. Look at the fact. Is Nature perfect Wisdom, or is she not? She is so perfect that you yourself say there is no need of anything else. Nature is perfect, because Nature is an efflux of Infinite Wisdom concreted into matter. Man alone is imperfect. Why? Because man is not only physical or material. God gave him of His best. It is of the very nature of Love to bestow all. He gave him a will and thought like His own, " made in His image," as free as His own, so that he can love God, and God can love him. He can love God or he can love self. He can love his fellow-men, as God loves them, as fully and freely in his finite degree as God does in His infinite degree, and with as little regard to any reward save the joy of doing good. But man is also free to love only those of his fellows whom he can use to further his selfish ends, and thus change the love or life—the real life within him—into love of self. He can love and believe, therefore, either in a God who serves him, or in a God who serves and loves others. Nay, more, his " will " is so entirely his " life," so completely the " end " of thought as a " cause," that he cannot even *think* of a God who loves him unselfishly, if he himself does not so love others. He thinks the thing impossible. Such and so great is the freedom of will to control thought and act, which has been given him.

There you have the explanation of the various false gods you so evidently and rightly detest. These are men's distortions of the one true God for the selfish purposes of their selfish loves. But whenever a man begins to love others—to will good to others—as much or more than self, he begins to love Goodness and Truth, and ultimate these in usefulness to others by knowledge of their needs. For Love and Wisdom are God Himself, in

essence and in person, "in Whom all things live and move and have their being." To man's mental or spiritual being He is Life and Light, and in man's physical acts the reception of that Life and Light finds its ultimate in goodness and truth. In so far as you evidently worship and long for Goodness and Truth in material life, and therefore labour for, and love your fellows, you are no atheist, but a true follower of that God who is Goodness and Truth. He it is you seek. "They who seek shall find."

"THE MISTAKES OF MOSES."

SIR,—It is thoroughly right and natural to question whether the ceremonial laws and civil code of the Pentateuch are such as to deserve either respect or obedience in this 19th century, and whether the God described by Moses, and known to the Hebrew nation, can by any possibility be identified with that "Being in immensity, beneath whose wing the universe exists, whose every thought is a glittering star." Still you ought at least to be just to Moses; and you are not. If the books of history ascribed to him, pretend to contain a history of the creation, as you suppose they do, then give him fair play by quoting correctly the words he uses. He does not say that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" *out of nothing*. He does not say what they were made out of; but just as little does he assert that they were made out of nothing. It is Col. Ingersoll who says that—not Moses.

Some people think this lecture of yours on "The Mistakes of Moses," blasphemous. Certainly you don't see it that way, and no one has any right to suppose you would desire to blaspheme a "Being whose every thought is a glittering star," if you knew of such an one whose Being is Love, whose effluent wisdom creates knowledges as pure and bright with peace and power as the stars that illumine and make glad the night. And besides you say that "it is the being described by the Jewish people to whom you refer in this lecture—that when you say God, you mean *him*." Your satires are just as regards their conceptions of God. How could such a people, debased and sensualized as they were, more even than the other peoples of that age, see or know almost anything of a God of Infinite Love and wisdom, except by material type or symbol. Only a few of them knew aught of the Being they worshipped, except the mere external ceremonial in which they were told to believe His power rested. These convinced them of a power and a law, able actually to influence their material interests; and just because they were unable to understand anything of the nature of that power, they were constantly breaking out into hateful deeds of cruelty and oppression, which they professed to do in His Name. Don't some people do that yet? You ought to know.

Created free in will or life, "in the image of God," it is in the power of man to will to obliterate, to stamp out of himself all spiritual life (or intellectual life if you like the term better); to resist the influx of love and wisdom into the spiritual "image of God" within him, which constitutes him "man," as distinguished from "beast," to merge his life in the material appetites and become as utterly brutish, sensual, cruel, devilish as any wild beast of the forest. These prey on others to gratify the lust of appetite, and slay for the mere joy of slaughter and the lust of exercising power. There have been men—I think you would yourself instance Napoleon I—who have succeeded almost in lowering their humanity to that level. If, then, the Jewish nation had by a long course of downward descent, culminating in the horrors of slavery, reached such a pitch, how could they receive any other idea of God than one adapted to the faculties they had permitted to remain alive in themselves. God, however Infinite in Love, could not reach them through any other faculties than those they possessed. Could He? Only by touching and waking these to the true order of their life again, could He reach and develop gradually the other faculties, dormant at least, if not utterly extinguished in them, by their own self-directed actions. So he gave them Moses as a stern law-giver. The Jews could believe in a law-giver who had power, and judge of the strength and reality of the power behind him by his power over others. They worshipped power, and only the consciousness of its reality could stop their downward descent, and yield them a chance to regain self-control. Just as a man who tries successfully to curb his lower passions in one direction, finds it easier to repeat the process in another direction. He has learned how.

It is true, literally true, that "to the froward God will show Himself froward;" not that He really is so, but because "the froward" have rendered their nature incapable either to see or believe in any being more powerful than themselves, who would not act exactly as they would do if they possessed similar greater power. It would be a more correct translation of the words quoted to render them "to the froward God *appears* froward." May I try to illustrate. Suppose a father gives advice to his son —his grown-up son, of course; because until your lecture on "Liberty for man, woman and *child*" is as widely read as it deserves to be, fathers will not, as a rule, condescend merely to advise *little* sons—give advice somewhat like this: The law of your life ought to be purity, the exercise of your powers so as not to do harm to any other creature in the gratification of your appetites or passions. If you do otherwise, you will inevitably hurt your own constitution as well as that of others. If the recipient of such advice has all along failed to appreciate the character of his father—a man who rules all his own passions into usefulness—the son will think, because he wills to think, that it is a much finer thing occasionally to "go on a tare," and forget all his

responsibilities. Willing thus, he will thus interpret the "old man's" thoughts and designs. Ah! Dad hopes to gammon me with his cant, does he? I know what's the matter with him. He's thinking of his pocket, and wants to keep me steady, in case he should have my debts to pay. It's beastly mean of him to grudge me my fling.

This view of the case might possibly be incorrect, yet honestly, that was how the youth read it. He was, you see, incapable of perceiving the love which animated and lived in his father's wisdom. He heard the actual words, but he put his own mean soul behind them, by which to catch and hold their meaning, amplifying and filling out their intent by sundry interjections of his own. Yet, if he did decide to act by his father's precepts, imperfectly as he understood them, and actually lived according to them, even out of deference to the old man's superior meanness, possibly he might come, through time, to see and know experimentally their true spirit, love of him, and love of others.

That is an imperfect parallel to the method in which the Old Testament Scriptures are written. They were written by men who were by no means perfect sons of God; and although it was truth in its purity which was given to them, they put their own mean souls, and mean capacities, behind these Divine Words of that infinite Wisdom which is the form of infinite Love. But the parallel is not a perfect one. It certainly does account for the fact that, in the literal sense of many portions of Scripture, there seems to be nothing of infinite Love and Wisdom. Yet we know *now*, because we have kept some of His precepts—those of them we could understand, because we could will to understand them—that if there be a true and only God, He must be one who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." It is easy enough, I do not doubt, for you to follow me thus far and say: "It is very pretty, but it isn't true." Well! now I want to draw liberally on your credence when I ask you to believe that every jot and tittle of that Bible you discard, because of its apparently *im*moral teachings, is inspired, and teaches only, in its every part—even in those which you consider the worst—the shunning of evil and the doing of good from love towards others. Yet you will see it to be at least possible by the following hypothesis. What if the external, natural, literal meaning be but a shell or husk in which is contained the true meaning? What if the literal words used are only the views of truth honestly held by those who wrote them? What if they were so guided as to use only words and metaphors which could contain and preserve within them the reality of Love and Wisdom, divine, celestial and spiritual; so that you have only to rub off the literal meaning, in order to discern a spiritual truth which is in perfect accord throughout from Genesis to Revelations in all the *inspired* books, and equally in unison with the Divine laws written in Nature? Indeed, it is from Nature and the study and accurate knowledge of her laws that we discover the correspondence be-

tween natural truth and spiritual truth, so as to trace the one by the other, and find both in their purity in that Divine Book, the Bible. Would that be inspiration such as the use of right reason could understand and appreciate?

To translate for you into its spiritual meaning every verse of the New Testament is a task alike beyond my power or space. Let me take only a few of those which, in their literal sense, you find specially hard to swallow.

You say that Moses evidently mistook "darkness" and "light" for actual things, substances, entities. Was it a mistake? The history of the Creation he gives, was probably extracted from a tradition of the actual process of the formation of the world. We now know certainly that, as scientific history, there was not much inspiration in it. Yet, the story is told so as to contain within it a spiritual history of the birth of man—that is man as regards the ever living or spiritual part of him which constitutes him "man" in any real sense. That "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" may be—nay is—a scientific fact, for we have seen that every "effect" must have a "cause." But that we can find out for ourselves by physical science based on the evidence of the senses. The powers of will and intellect we find within us were given to us to use on that and other questions. What we *do* need in a revelation is a knowledge which shall grow within us into wisdom, as to the origin, nature and use of those faculties which make up our life; *i. e.* will and thought. And here we find, "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" within man, the mental and the physical form of man, the spiritual and the natural. And the earth, or natural, was without form and void. The spiritual part of man did not as yet rule and form it. And darkness, the darkness of mere natural sensual appetites was upon every expression of the inner depths of the merely natural truths impressed upon the laws of physical form. Then the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (the expression of natural truth in the appearances of things physical in and around man), thus saying "let there be light" in man as to what these impulses and thoughts, drawn forth towards natural objects, really are. And there was light—Light from the Divine wisdom—flowing into the internal man, meeting and joining itself to natural light, or truth, flowing in from without by natural objects. And God divided the light from the darkness. The darkness was the animal form and animal propensities of man. The light was the spiritual form and spiritual affection of the internal man. These two were made separate, or discrete, degrees of life, never to intermingle, yet capable of living, the one in the other, without losing identity as separate substances. So the spiritual form of light became a firmament, a fixed, unalterable creation, a dividing line which preserved the spiritual being of man from becoming wholly natural and animal. Then the earth, or natural man, began to grow and fructify by the influx of a higher life from the Divine source

of all life, through this spiritual heaven in man, into the natural man, or earth, and gradually the ultimate perception of genuine—not spurious—natural truth, the tender grass, made its appearance amid the physical faculties; then the herb, a more developed form of true perception, and yielding seed, the germ of further perception. Soon whole trees of perception, of goodness and truth, formed themselves in man's rational faculties, yielding fruit, or truth wrought out into usefulness, the productive power of which fruit of usefulness inhered within the very nature of the use performed. Then, and not till then, could men perceive the cause; and therefore not till then did it dawn upon their consciousness that there was a Sun of Righteousness to rule the day, a God of love and wisdom, life and light, shining into their spiritual being—the day within man—and a lesser light of faith in natural law, obedience to which might wisely and lovingly rule the night or physical nature. This is only the faintest sketch. Only please note this, that the history of creation, as described in this first chapter of Genesis, can be seen yet in the mental or spiritual history of every child born into the world—first conscious only of animal appetites, gradually there dawns, into the natural, a consciousness of a higher life; and this by a so-called natural process—a process truly natural, and therefore spiritual, and celestial also.

Now another puzzle of yours presents itself—Achan's sin and punishment, the cruelty of which, as recorded, naturally revolts your kindly heart. For you must either be kind-hearted or else insincere to speak as you do of the sufferings of others. I confess I have much difficulty in believing you insincere. Let me try to show you a glimpse of the spiritual meaning of Achan and his sin. The Israelites were, as you know, the very reverse of spiritual, or highly intellectual, men. Yet, in Scripture, they *represent* the spiritual man, and their wars and conquests in entering into the land of Canaan represent, or correspond to, the wars or conquests of the spiritual man against the natural man and his appetites, and Canaan, the land or state of rest which man shall enter into when he has fully succeeded in reducing all carnal appetites and passions within him into the true order of their being. Achan is one of these Jews, of the very lowest tribes, the tribe of Judah. He represents, therefore, the spiritual man with the very smallest degree of the will for good within him. He covets a Babylonish garment. A garment always denotes truth or falsity. In this case external, natural truth falsified from love of evil; for Babel and Babylon denote those who worship from love of self. Silver corresponds to spiritual truth; in this case falsified in the intellect; for the same reason. Gold represents the innermost will principle, good or evil according to its direction of love towards others, or love towards self; in this case evil. These were possessions, properties of his foes—were things in the natural man, sensuous deception in act, sensuous *ir*-rational thought, both the

product of ill-directed sensual appetite; but the spiritual man "coveted" them, loved them, took them, and hid them in the midst of his tent, that is in the whole of his actions; for that in which a man dwells eternally as his habitation, is the all of his will and thought which he has ultimated in act. Silver in its higher sense is the spiritual truth with which man is gifted from Above. That "he put under them"—did not permit it to rule his desires. Then Joshua, who represents the Saviour, as the very name implies, saw and revealed his exact state and condition to him, roused, by the messengers of His Providence, the remains of goodness and truth implanted by Him in every man as "His image," brought out to the view of the Elders, who are the more matured and developed reasoning faculties within the man not as yet wholly corrupted by his evil loves, exposed to these, and to the innermost will of the man, all the consequences of his sensual covetousness, *i.e.* the wife or love principle to which the falsity would adjoin itself, the sons and daughters, or other falsities and evils to which united they would give birth, and the still lower natural affections sustaining and surrounding these represented by oxen, asses, sheep, &c., &c. Is it any wonder that all the good that was in him condemned these to extinction, or that he carried out the sentence pronounced by his better self? took of the stones, which correspond to natural truth, and so destroyed them utterly; for the Lord had brought him light. Did that mean death and destruction to the natural appetites? No more than death now means a cessation of life. Even the hieroglyphics of Egypt represent burial as a resurrection to a better life. So it is here. Burial means a new life for the natural appetites, a fuller, richer life, under the rule of the spiritual man, and *that* obedient to the beneficent Author of all life.

Then again you deem it odd that the sun and moon should stand still in order that Joshua might kill a few more wretched savages. Yet, it is a fact all the same, in the spiritual sense, that the Lord, who is the Sun of Righteousness, never does withdraw His Sun of celestial wisdom, nor His spiritual light of Truth (to which, or faith, the moon corresponds) so long as man wills to conquer and overcome his evils. It is always day to the man who is fighting against his own evils. There shall be light for him even in the night.

Then you object to the bears which ate up the forty and two children who mocked Elisha. But you will not when you understand what it means. *Elijah* represents the internal sense of the Divine Word which ascends from, or by, love of truth, a chariot of fire, indeed, to heaven. Fire corresponds to the warmth of love; chariot to truth progressive. *Elisha* represents the external or literal words of Holy Writ on which the mantle of spirtual truth still rests. Children represent affections—don't fond mothers even yet call them "little loves?"—They also correspond to the opposite, and so evil loves which destroy obedience

to the external life of goodness, taught in, at least, some of the literal words of Scripture, naturally mock at the baldness of Elisha. Baldness, since it refers to the head, and the head corresponds to that union of will and intellect in man which rules, and is, the life, and ultimates in the very extreme of its every minute external, corresponds to the most external of the will and thought of Elisha, who represents the literal meaning of Scripture. So this incident means that evil loves could see no ultimate good *to themselves* in the doing of any good in a practical every-day way even where that was clearly enjoined, and rendered as beautiful externally as hair is, and therefore mocked at it, or rather at what seemed to them the lack of it. Then the bears, which correspond to the animal passions of the animal man, came out of the woods—woods correspond to the natural perceptions of natural truth in man—and utterly destroyed these evil loves out of the life. Again you see we find the same truth; that the Lord implants remains of goodness and truth in every degree of man's life, even in the natural man, fitted to cope with and conquer his evils, if man himself will but permit it.

Of such a quality is the whole spirit of that divinely inspired Book the Bible. Its inspiration does not consist in its scientific or historical accuracy, but in this, that every incident chronicled is so told as to convey, by natural symbols, a spiritual meaning, consonant with that infinite love and wisdom which are God, and live alike in His words and His works. Nature is but the basis on which Revelation rests.

But the orthodox (?) doctrine of the Atonement stands in the way of any rational understanding of Scripture. It necessitates either three gods of entirely different dispositions, or else one god possessed of at least two qualities which are diametrically opposed. Whereas the truth is, as we have seen, that there can be only one first cause either of life or matter; and that first cause, having made man "in His image" can be discerned, as to His nature, by those finite qualities in that creation of His, which may be described as truly "man." As man's life, in its inmost, is will or end; in its cause, thought, or intellect; and in its effect action; so the being of God is will or love as the inmost, or essence; wisdom as to the form, or existence; and infinite usefulness, or providence, as to the acts performed. Here the parallel is alike comprehensible and complete—as complete as any parallel between finite, as compared with infinite, can be. Now, do we say of a *man's* will thought and acts that these are *three* men? On the contrary, so entirely is the man shown in the ultimate, or deeds, which he achieves that we call these his life because the end and cause are in the effect. Will and thought find expression in his acts, and are always in such perfect unison, that we recognise them as only *one* man and not *three*. You cannot apply this parallel too exactly. It precisely represents the nature of God, and is intended to do so, as one and indivisible, the sole first cause, crea-

tor, originator of life, the "I am," the sole self-existing Being. Holding such knowledge distinctly in your view, approach anew the keystone of Biblical truth, the Atonement. There is no occasion to shirk it as your opponents do. It is a rational truth, true to nature, true to man's nature, and true to the very Being of that God who is love.

If, as the Divine word says, man, as regards his spiritual being, "is made in the image of God" and invested with a material covering or physical form in and by which to exercise that life, is it beyond the region of the possible that God might also so clothe Himself in the human form, when by no other means than that could He make Himself and His real nature perceptible to man, control evil, drive it from its plane of attack in the animal nature of man, and replace the evil with His own Divine Good? How otherwise effect this with a being who possesses free will, free life, as man does, than by touching the will within man by contact with Infinite Love veiled in a human form so as to wake to life again human sympathies, and thus gradually restore, by natural channels, the influx of His Life and Light, His Goodness and Truth into humanity? Precisely this is the human side of the atonement. The apostle Paul is *not* one of the inspired writers. His words will not bear a spiritual interpretation. His utterances are not the continent, or containing vessels, of spiritual wisdom, nor written in full and exact correspondence of Heavenly things with earthly things; but they are truth on the natural plane—common sense you would call it—and when he says "God was in Christ"—the Divine in the human—reconciling the world unto Himself, he strikes the key note of the whole doctrine of the atonement. Does this idea of God—the one God, Jehovah, the Living or Loving One—clothed in a material human form, stagger your reason? Well, why so? If Infinite Love living in Infinite Wisdom, can concrete an efflux of that wisdom into matter, so that He shall thus cause, create, and in-fill Nature with those laws which are but emanations from Himself, separate, yet of and from Him, is it a more marvellous thing, or a less marvellous that He should assume and manifest Himself in that highest form of His creation, the human form—still God as to His will, perfect Love towards all His creatures, wisdom as to His Form, and Goodness and Truth embodied as to His every physical act? Only thus could He meet, conquer, and remove the evils and miseries which man's perversion of the will and thought bestowed upon him in freedom to use had made hereditary and ingrained into every form of natural or physical life in that age. Few students of history will care to deny that at the date at which our Lord assumed the human, men had almost wholly embruted themselves, and become well nigh unconscious of any life within them except the sensuous and sensual animal life. Only by appealing to the senses in which they had submerged themselves, and by the Infinite Love and gentleness of Wisdom displayed towards them on the plane of their own sensual percep-

tions, could He wake to life again a love for others by drawing it, even in some feeble measure, away from self and self gratification, towards Him who is Infinite Love. And so Infinite Love lived thus for us, and died as to the Human, that we might regain spiritual freedom of will, *i. e.*, life. Not to appease His own wrath did He die. Against His Life of Love fought all the powers of evil, both in this natural world and in that other or spiritual world where dwell the spirits of men who were once, as we are now, clothed in matter. These alike loved darkness and hated light, because their will, thought, and deeds were evil. By them "was He taken and by wicked hands was crucified and slain" —slain only as to the body He had assumed. No power of evil could find entrance into Him who is the Infinite Good and Truth—who Himself said "fear not those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do." He triumphed over the power of death and of hell; for not by one tiniest channel of His humanity did evil find entrance. Yet it is in the natural, the animal lusts and passions of man that evil finds its theatre of war. There God Himself met, conquered, and drove back the powers of evil, overcame evil with His own Divine Good, thus clearing the natural channels of man's physical and spiritual being for the influx of His Divine Life and Light. Thus He redeemed man by the only natural way. Thus by His own Divine Life He regenerated His Human Nature and rendered it Divine, that by the communication thus opened by this way of intercession, He might reach, save, regenerate, heal, all men who were willing to come unto Him, all who in any feeble measure could receive into any avenue of their being any of that *love of others*, in any form, which is life from Him and for Him. Is love of others religion? Listen. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me."

But what about Hell? Simply this. God punishes no one, but on the contrary, He tries by every method possible to His Infinite Wisdom to prevent man from rushing into evils and their consequent miseries. But He *can* not, because He is Infinite Love, and *will* not, destroy or withdraw man's free will or free life. Were He to do so, man would cease to be man. He would become an animal, a vegetable, or a mineral, but no longer a man. Are there many men so sunk in evil as to choose that fate? I think not. You instance suicides. Well, these occur usually in hope of a life of quiet and rest from mental or physical misery. The suicide does not, even in his madness, usually court oblivion, but change, rest, peace, change for the better. Man loves life both here and hereafter, and he is never deprived of it. Man's personal freedom is never infringed by the Almighty. Man is led, not driven. It is man who tries to infringe upon the liberties of his fellow man. That is *man*-like, but not *God*-like. It was part of Our Lord's redemption to restore liberty and manhood to the captive, first as to man's spiritual nature, and then, through that, to his physical being also. And that liberty, that

spiritual freedom He gained even for those in the state called Hell. Our Lord so met, conquered and reduced to order by the influx of His Divine Life into every fibre of the human form in which He clothed Himself, those evil men and women who strive for complete mastery by force or fraud over their fellows, that He compelled all to respect each other's individual liberty, and yet left each in possession of his, or her, own personal freedom. His salvation, His redemption, was as complete, in its degree, for the spiritually evil in the other world, as for the naturally evil in this world. Now, not even in the lowest and most sensual hell, can man torture so as to control the will of his neighbours. True, man can still torture the bodies of his fellow-men and so control these. He can no longer torture so as to control the mind of him who would be free. In ancient times, by magical works, in the spiritual and natural realm alike, both mind and body could be controlled and possessed. Now order prevails even in Hell, preserving to each and all personal freedom. But such liberty is not license. Liberty—true liberty—is freedom to use one's own faculties. License is liberty by our faculties to rule into nothingness the faculties of others. True spiritual liberty our Lord's re-redemptive work has gained for all spiritual men here and hereafter. The liberty of license His power has finally and for ever conquered. In the spiritual condition called hell, men are continually willing evil to others and dominion for self. But whenever they come upon that plane of their being, which they must occupy in order to carry out their will for evil towards others into act, they meet, on that plane, the relative opposing Good of the Lord's Divine Humanity, against which they oppose themselves in vain. It is as a wall, or rock, of Truth, against which they may, if they will, in their freedom, dash themselves to their own injury or suffering, but they can not conquer; and as soon as they desist, the Lord is ever with them in love to heal their wounds. "If I make my bed in hell behold *Thou* art there."

Why do not these effects follow exactly in the natural world as well as in the spiritual? Well, they do follow in some degree. But matter, and its laws, are dull and slow of action, as compared with mental or spiritual substance, and its laws; and men have not yet learned, or tried to learn, more than partially, that it is impossible to rule even matter by material force. They even yet hope to rule spiritual life by material force, and there they find themselves powerless; for the Lord hath set the spiritual free. Men cannot by physical power deprive of freedom the will and the thought. That is a fact here and now. Can it be less a fact when the spirit is set free from that inert matter in which it now lives, and comes fully under the operation of spiritual law. The effect of our Lord's redemption is only as yet dawning into physical life. It is the reproach of Christianity that it has done so little for man. There is nothing to boast of. Yet it could not be otherwise, sunk as men were in self and sensuality. Only by

man's freedom of will or life, exercised in a voluntary choice to receive the Lord's Light and Life into their darkness, could they rise into a more real and expansive degree of freedom of life,—but therein rests the power of the Lord's redemption. The love of goodness and truth, the will to do good, formed and exercised ever so feebly in the physical state, finds a marvellous access of power when, freed from matter, it takes hold upon eternal life in a state where spiritual law alone prevails. There, in that other life, it is not only free, but in its full potency; and in so far as the spiritual is the cause of the natural—not the natural of the spiritual—we find in the natural world a wonderful progress during these eighteen centuries, slow at first, but sure, and now, within these last fifty years, alike rapid and certain. Soon the liberty of Heaven will prevail on earth. Soon the restraints of hell will operate in the hells upon earth. The arbitrary punishments of wrath and revenge for crime will cease. Some imperfect yet real imitation of the wise, powerful, but loving and preservative restraints upon the will to infringe the personal liberty of others, shall find its way into our laws, into the discipline of our prisons and reformatories (?), and into our family life amid our children. God's law of love will be permitted to permeate our actions, and replace the hideous national and family codes, based so much at present upon that vengeful cruelty which flows from our love of dominion for the sake of self.

Don't you recognize the dawn? Already such is the moral sense of some sections at least of the community, that laws to punish what creeds and orthodoxy call blasphemy cannot be put in operation. They are a dead letter. Again, a man who would like to flog his child dare not do so openly, in the sight or hearing of his neighbours. He fears their moral and deserved contempt. Cruelty to animals is forbidden by public opinion, as well as by law. Cruelty to children will soon be. Take heart and take courage. The Lord reigneth. The earth, the lower, sensual plane of man's physical nature, will yet keep silence before Him, and submit in a voluntary awe, wrought by love in the heart from the Lord, of the Lord and toward the neighbour, to the rule of the Infinite Love and Wisdom, which showed Himself in a natural human life in His Divine-Humanity eighteen centuries ago.

Is such a redemption, reconciliation, atonement, salvation, one at which you will care to scoff? I think not. Is it what you are seeking? Is there a God whom we can know and recognize by our highest faculties? Listen to the words of Him who was apparently only a man, yet who, if the words of His life be true, lived out in his deeds an Infinite Love and gentleness. He says, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," Jehovah, the Loving One, the supreme source of all life. And His beloved disciple says, "No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten son, who is in the bosom (the inmost will principle) of the Father, hath *placed Him visibly before you.*"